

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: [Re]aNiMAte: A PUPPET THEATER  
WORKSHOP FOR SILVER SPRING

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The spirit of place resides not only in physical parameters, but also in the symbolic meanings that grow up around them as a result of the history, participation and the belonging of the people who use them. In a place where the built environment is in a state of constant change, how may social traditions such as arts festivals and holiday parades be the source of continuity for the community? This thesis studies the relationship of the built environment to the actions and interactions of people in the public realm. It will explore how architecture may help to re-create a community identity by fostering everyday interaction and special community traditions. The Puppet Theater Workshop explores the connection of community building to the built environment through anticipation, ritual and memory. This thesis uses the metaphor of puppetry to express the reanimation of a place with magic, make-believe, storytelling, and fantasy.

**[Re]aNiMATE: A PUPPET THEATER WORKSHOP  
FOR SILVER SPRING**

By

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Advisory Committee:  
Professor Ralph Bennett, Chair  
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To

Jared the Brave  
and Sammy the Fair,

my inspirations  
for the  
Puppet Theater Workshop

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PART I: THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
OF DOWNTOWN SILVER SPRING

## BOOM OR BUST

Strategically placed on the East side of Georgia Avenue at the corner of Colesville Road, the new Silver Spring Shopping Center accommodated commuters driving home from working in the District of Columbia. A 1938 article in The Washington Post described the new Shopping Center as “one of the most complete shopping centers in America.”<sup>1</sup> It was a rarity when it was built, and its commercial success spurred the first major commercial and residential boom for Silver Spring. Soon new commercial, industrial and auto-related businesses clustered along Georgia Avenue, Colesville Road and the B&O railroad line.

After World War II, Silver Spring entered a new boom in redevelopment as prosperity, automobiles and the desire for a suburban lifestyle rapidly accelerated growth. In 1946, the Hecht Company opened its first suburban branch store “in a cornfield” on the corner of Colesville Road and Fenton Street, with J.C. Penny’s starting its first suburban department store across the street.<sup>2</sup> These stores served as anchors for the proliferation of other retail and service outlets.

By the late 1940s, Downtown Silver Spring had become the top retail center in Montgomery County, with a trading area encompassing the growing middle and high-

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<sup>1</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. “Silver Spring’s history has been boom or bust”. The Gazette, Nov 1, 1995, p. A-4.

<sup>2</sup> 1994 Community Guide and Business Directory, p. 27.

income areas of upper Northwest Washington and the wealthy suburbs of Montgomery County.

In response to the increased residential development of the 1960s, major retail centers, particularly malls, were built in Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda and upper Silver Spring. In 1961, the first section of the Beltway opened in Silver Spring. Two Beltway exits on the major historic corridors of Georgia Ave and Colesville Road provided additional access to the downtown, but no intensive development was permitted. The completion of the Beltway in 1968 facilitated access to the Central Business District and the expansion of the retail trading area to the North.

Despite resistance by the local merchants, the county government imposed paid parking, a decision which a major contributing factor in Silver Spring's retail decline years later when new up-county malls offered free parking to customers. The combination of these improvements contributed to excessive traffic congestion, making pedestrian crossing of streets unsafe, and eventually contributing to further discourage shopping in Silver Spring.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the Metro to Silver Spring in 1978 provided 20,000 new subway riders per day.<sup>4</sup> While the Downtown grew from 2.7 million to 5.8 million square feet of office space in a 30-month period and 5 Multi-level parking garages were built to serve subway commuters, it did not bring back the retail needed to sustain office workers and residents.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1994 Community Guide & Business Directory, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Jaffeson, Richard C. Silver Spring Success: An Interactive History, November 1995, p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. "Silver Spring's History has been boom or bust," The Gazette, Nov. 1, 1995.

By the mid-1980s, Silver Spring's image had become one of abandoned stores, underused parking garages and empty parking lots. In 1987, The Hecht Store started a trend as it was the first to close its Silver Spring store and reopen in suburban malls.

During the 1980s and 1990s, several attempts were made to revitalize the downtown area, although none succeeded in changing Silver Spring's damaged image. In the early 1990s, plans were begun for "City Place," a multi-level enclosed shopping mall on the same site as the old Hecht Store.<sup>6</sup> The mall provided 300,000 square ft of offices, department stores, 3 restaurants, a food court and an AMC theater with 10 screens.

In 1995, the developer of "Mall of America" in Bloomington, Minnesota proposed to build the \$585 million "American Dream Mall" in downtown Silver Spring. The 28.4-acre retail, recreation and entertainment space was to include shopping, restaurants, theaters, a hotel, an ice rink, a wave pool, an amusement park and nightclubs.<sup>7</sup>

"American Dream" activated the Silver Spring community to establish *Citizens for Sensible Development*. The opposition group assembled a panel of designers and architects to participate in a community forum<sup>8</sup> to discuss revitalization alternatives. The designers touted pedestrian-friendly streets, community-oriented outdoor spaces, and a Town-center plan, designed to boost existing small businesses. The discussion laid the groundwork for the 1997 masterplan that guides the current redevelopment.

Since 1998, Developers have worked with the County to rebuild downtown Silver Spring, refurbishing older buildings and constructing new buildings for shops, restaurants

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<sup>6</sup> Jaffeson, Richard C. Silver Spring Success: An Interactive History, November 1995, p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. "Residents like the new 'dream'," The Gazette, Nov 15, 1995, page?.

<sup>8</sup> Henderson, Susan. "Designers offer ideas for downtown areas," The Gazette, June 26, 1996, page?.

and open space. (figs. 5 & 6) Nearly \$1 billion in public/private investment has been funneled into the area. More than 800 new housing units are being built in South Silver Spring, as well as new retail and restaurants.<sup>9</sup> Developers and county officials continue to reach out to businesses that may be interested in coming to the area.

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<sup>9</sup> Hooker, Meredith. "Redevelopment keeps rolling," The Gazette, March 9, 2005, p. A-4,A-5

PARADES, PENGUINS, PUPPETS:  
CONTINUITY FOR A COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION

For 70 years, Silver Spring has developed a strong tradition of outdoor arts festivals and parades. Since June 2004, Downtown Silver Spring hosted the area's first jazz festival, and *Magical Montgomery*, the county's arts festival, (fig 7) as well as a weekly summer concert series on Silver Circle. In November, the County's annual holiday parade drew over 8,000 people to Ellsworth Ave and Fenton Street. The highlight of this parade was Silver Spring's endeared Penguin, (of Silver Spring Metro Station Mural fame) who proudly floated down Ellsworth Ave to the delight and cheers of the community. (fig 8)

During the long construction phase of 1995-2004, the built environment of Downtown Silver Spring constantly changed. The discontinuity created by 9 years of relocation , deconstruction and new construction inspired spontaneous, creative new uses of the built environment by the community. (fig 12) In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980), Michel de Certeau posits that a "Tactic" can be a spontaneous and ephemeral reaction, relying on adaptation and seasonally and culturally specific.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkley, University of California Press, 1984, p. 69.

I posit the following four examples of tactical reuse of the built environment during the interim period (1990-2004) which demonstrate the eclectic and creative spirit of Silver Spring:

Oct., 1990: All the stores on Ellsworth Drive, in the heart of the downtown area closes down and empties, their occupants either relocated or put out of business. Community children spontaneously paint murals on the boarded-up shop windows spanning the entire length of the block.<sup>11</sup>

Aug-Dec., 1995: The abandoned shell of *Fashion Craze* on Ellsworth Drive is tactically transformed into a Giant Puppet Workshop, to prepare the Giant Puppets for the “First Night” New Years Eve Festival. One puppet-maker recalled in an interview that the space’s high ceilings and large open areas were perfectly sized for the puppets, some of which were 12-feet high. Since it was abandoned, “nobody cared if it got messy or not, since it was going to be demolished in a couple of months.”<sup>12</sup>

June-Sept., 1996: The old Hecht’s store on Fenton Street and Colesville Road is torn down to make room for “City Place” Mall. In the interim period, between deconstruction and reconstruction, the site is an

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<sup>11</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. “Making new use of available space,” *The Gazette*, December 14, 1995, p. A-10.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

empty lot, defined on one side by a 7 story party wall, painted white. The space is tactically commandeered to be a drive-in movie theater, with old movies projected on the white brick wall of the building on the adjoining lot. (fig 13)

1996-2004: The empty space in front of the old Silver Shopping Center on Georgia Ave and Colesville Road becomes a farmer's market, operated by local nurseries. During the Holiday season, the market sells Pumpkins and Christmas trees.

De Certeau goes on to define a "Strategy" being a result from the practices of the powerful who compose and manage space. It is a top-down system, as opposed to the tactic, which comes from below. The strategy is driven by political and financial motivations, but in some cases be originally a tactic.

The ephemeral puppet workshop set up in the abandoned *Fashion Craze* store, began as a tactic, inspiring the Silver Spring Neighborhood Arts Project to submit a proposal to use parts of the original shopping center as studio or exhibit space for a community arts center. Initially, the proposal was at rejected by the county for that site. As the idea simmered for 7 years, the Tactic developed into Strategy; Blair Mills Arts Center and Arts Alley, (figs 14-15) is currently under construction and slated to open in late 2005. A hybrid of Old Town Alexandria's Torpedo Factory and the typology of an open-air farmers market, the project is furthering change of Silver Spring's image into an eclectic place for visual and theatrical artists.



## CASAULTIES OF REDEVELOPMENT

The “revitalization” process of downtown Silver Spring has had casualties as well. By December of 1995, Montgomery County had completed the process of condemning and acquiring properties on 14 acres of downtown, including parts of Georgia Ave, Colesville Road, Wayne Ave, Fenton Street, Ellsworth Drive and Pershing Drive. 41 businesses were bought by the county for Silver Spring redevelopment, forcing to them relocate or go out of business. (fig 16) The county was required by law to help the businesses relocate; the business owners did not receive much help.<sup>13</sup>

The county made small business owners like Mary Johnson (See Appendix A) believe that she and other Ellsworth store owners were “welcome to return there at the appropriate time,” with full knowledge that it would be “highly unlikely, since they wouldn’t be able to afford the cost of rent of the new place.”<sup>14</sup> Other small business that couldn’t find new sites to relocate, were forced to close, as were businesses that were not even involved in the demolition. As one business owner explained, “People didn’t think we were here anymore.”

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<sup>13</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. “Small Businesses: Don’t Forget Us,” The Gazette, May 22, 1995, p. A-1, A-10.

<sup>14</sup> Phillips, Vanessa. “Waiting for Redevelopment isn’t easy”, December 6, 1995) p. A-1, A-12.

. By 2004, several businesses and restaurants along Colesville Road and around the periphery of the redeveloped area had closed. A year later, business owners say they have not seen the benefits from the redevelopment and say they may have to move. Some are concerned that escalating rents will force businesses to move, and longtime apartment-dwellers are wary as well, hoping they will not be priced out of a market they have called home for some time.<sup>15</sup> Although the owners of small businesses in the area want the revitalization efforts to succeed, they feel that they are ignored by the redevelopment process, and are afraid that a new downtown threatens small business.

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<sup>15</sup> “Silver Spring reborn in 2004,” Gazette Community News

## REMEMBRANCE, RECONNECTION AND RENEWAL IN A REDEVELOPED PLACE

In The Phenomenon of Place, Norberg-Schultz posits "...dwelling above all presupposes identification with the environment. It is evidently possible to orient oneself well without true identification; one gets along without feeling "at home." And it is possible to feel at home without being well acquainted with the spatial structure of the place. In modern society, however, attention has almost exclusively been concentrated on the 'practical' function or orientation, whereas identification has been left to chance."<sup>16</sup>

Norberg-Schultz furthers to argue the interdependence of one's environment with his conception of self:

"When a man dwells, he is simultaneously located in space and exposed to a certain environmental character. The two psychological functions involved, may be 'orientation' and 'identification' To gain an existential foothold, man has to be able to orient himself; he has to know where he is. But he also has to identify himself with the environment, that is, he has to know how he is in a certain place."<sup>17</sup>

In Image of the City, Lynch asserts that a good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. "Where the system is weak, the image-making becomes difficult, and man feels 'lost.'"<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, an authentic environmental character of a "place" cannot be attained through well-designed architecture alone; there must be presence of a unique

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<sup>16</sup> Norberg-Schulz, Christian. "Phenomenon of Place," New York: Abbesville Publishing Group, 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Lynch, The Image of the City, Cambridge: MIT Press, p. 4.

“community character” (figs 17-29) brought to life in the everyday and special interactions among people in the public realm.

The concept of *ma*, in Japanese art, music, drama and culture, is described as “the natural interval in time and space between two events that exist in continuity. It is present, but not in the sense of a moment that separates the eternity of the past from the immortality of the future.” Rather, *ma* is a multi-dimensional experience of time that not only fills a space, but imbues the space with meaning and contextualizes all that surrounds the space. In this sense, it ties directly to the individual's experience of the void of space. It is not emptiness, but possesses its own dynamic and extensibility. “While *ma* is certainly not concrete, it does, nonetheless, have a palpability and tactility to it; *ma* describes, and culturally grounds our experience...”<sup>19</sup>

Phoebe Wilson seeks to develop an “antidote for the alienation of suburban neighborhoods...longing for the sense of community and connection to the city.” Her “Neighborhood Place” clusters civic services and community-oriented commercial amenities with open space, right in the middle of residential neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Place would function “as a method to install a heart in existing residential neighborhoods.”<sup>20</sup> and would “make people’s lives richer, safer and more enjoyable, and should strengthen the bonds of community.”<sup>21</sup>

Wilson argues that open space is important to the creation of a Neighborhood Place because of its “public character and because it allows for the spontaneous gathering

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<sup>19</sup> Federman, Mark. “The Cultural Paradox of the Global Village” paper presented at the EU-Japan Fest 10th Anniversary Symposium on The Role of Culture in an Age of Advancing Globalization, held in Tokyo, Japan, February 10-11, 2003.)

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, Phoebe. “A Day in the Life of a Neighborhood Place,” p. 124.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

of groups of people. Most open spaces, such as school playgrounds, pocket parks, community gardens, and empty lots are also the realm of children; kids can make noise, messes, and movements outdoors that would be frowned on inside. These places provide a link to the natural world, to the elements of earth, air and growth denied by human-made structures.”<sup>22</sup>

Depending on the time of day, day of the week, and season, Ellsworth Drive, functions as a “Neighborhood Place” (figs 24-25) for people living in downtown Silver Spring as well as people living in the suburban neighborhoods around the central Business District. In the evenings (all year long), the street is closed to car traffic and classical or jazz is piped in through speakers buried in the landscaping. A new *Borders* serves local and regional customers. Above the ground level retail is a movie theater, the weekend hang-out place for teens. Across the street, two ice-cream shops have lines that go out the door every night of the week, all year around, especially when the movies let out. During summer afternoons, Silver Circle becomes a hub for families; parents mingle and kids race through the brightly colored glass mosaic fountain.

The proceeding paragraph describes the condition on Ellsworth Ave, one block North of Wayne Ave. This part of Wayne Ave designates the edge of the “Theater District,” and the redeveloped area. The south side of Wayne Ave, the location for the Puppet Theater Workshop, offers a stark contrast. The buildings are two and three stories, local retail on the ground level. 65 percent of “Fenton Street Village” as it is called in the 1997 Master plan) is privately owned surface parking. Many of the businesses in this area are auto-repair related, making for a landscape of dead cars and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp.128-129.

chain-link. The dramatic contrast of landscapes calls attention to the hermetic nature of Downtown Silver Spring's redevelopment.

The Master plan calls for a new Civic Center and public plaza on the South-East corner of Ellsworth Avenue and Fenton Street. The site for the public plaza was bulldozed, and carpeted with Astroturf in preparation for the Jazz Festival in September 2005. Although the site is officially called Veteran's Plaza, locals refer to it as AstroTurf Field. The AstroTurf was supposed to be removed shortly after the Jazz Festival, but it has become so popular for soccer games that officials are reluctant to order construction on Veteran's Plaza.

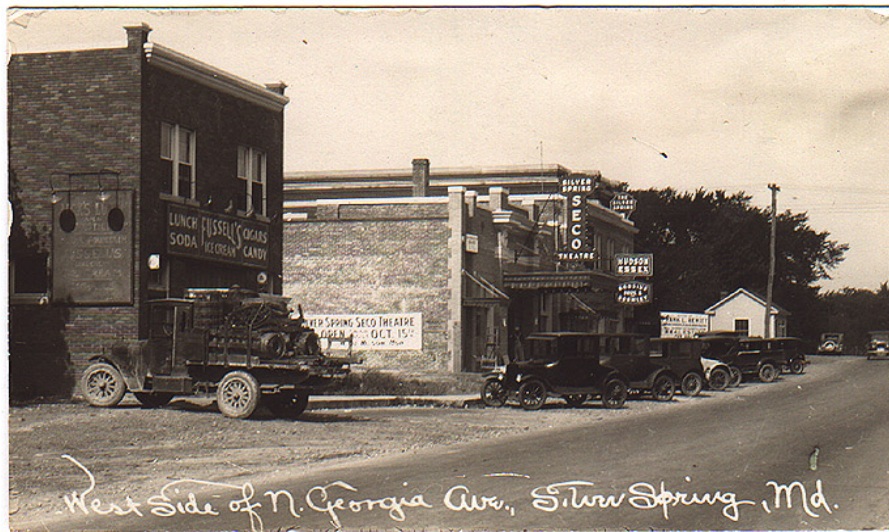


SITE VICINITY MAP

**Figure 1: Aerial Photograph of Downtown Silver Spring**

The yellow line indicates the District of Columbia/ Maryland border. The Central Business District is highlighted in white; the Theater/Arts District is outlined with a blue dotted line. The red mark represents the site for the Puppet Theater Workshop





**Figure 2 Georgia Ave., 1916**

Historical Photo of Georgia Ave in 1916, when it was still a dirt road





**Figure 3: Silver Theater, 1930s**

The American Film Institute has purchased and restored the Silver Theater to its original splendor. The Silver Theater hosts independent, foreign and art film festivals. The Theater was one of only two historic structures to be preserved in the redevelopment



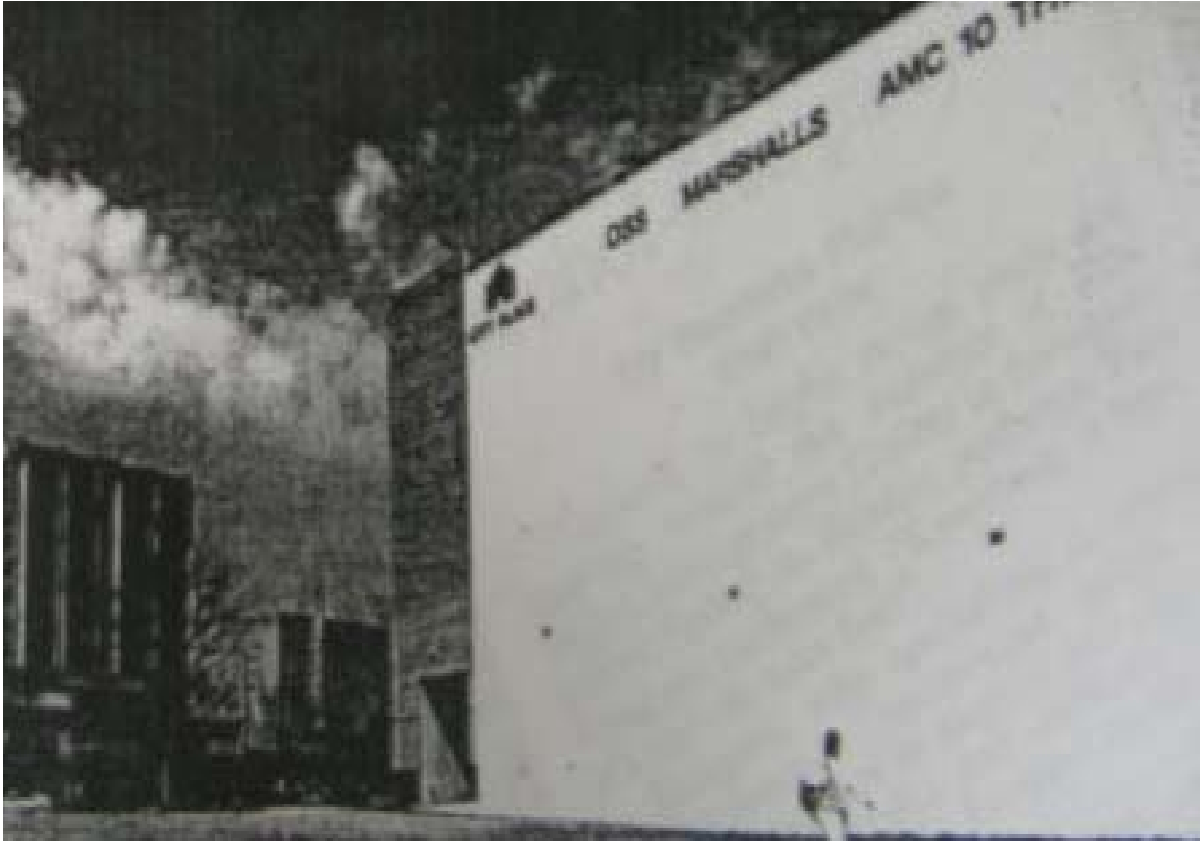
**Figure 4: Thanksgiving Parade, 2004**

A reference to the Mural in the Metro Station on Colesville Road and Wayne Avenue, the Penguin has become the mascot of Downtown Silver Spring,



**Figure 5: Downtown Silver Spring, 1995**

For over two decades, built environment was in a state of constant change. The car repair station on Georgia Ave and Wayne Ave (center) was to be the site of the Discovery Channel Headquarters ten years later.



**Figure 6: Site of demolished Hecht Store became tactically reused as a drive-in movie theater.**  
This is one example of how the abandoned and demolished environment was tactically readapted to provide a neighborhood gathering place.



**Figure 7: Corner of Colesville Road and Georgia Ave at night**  
Neon lights and Art Deco detailing bring a fun and relaxed energy to the night streetscape.





**Figure 8: Saturday Morning Farmer's Market, September 2005**

Fenton Street between Wayne Ave and Ellsworth Ave is closed to car traffic on Saturday mornings and for special events. Each week the farmer's market draws a larger and larger crowd.



**Figure 9: Silver Circle, October, 2005.**  
Spontaneous activity around the fountain for a typical Sunday morning.



**Figure 10: Silver Circle, October, 2005.**  
Spontaneous activity around the fountain for a Sunday morning.





**Figure 11: Silver Circle, October, 2005.**  
Spontaneous activity on a typical Friday night.



**Figure 12: Silver Circle, August, 2005**  
Activity on a weekday morning during the summer.



**Figure 13: Corner of Fenton and Ellsworth, Sept, 2005**  
Pedestrian Activity on a Sunday evening.





**Figure 14: Ellsworth Ave, October 2005**  
“Special” Activity at the annual “Magical Montgomery” Arts Festival,



**Figure 15: AstroTurf Plaza, September, 2005**

“Special” Activity at the Annual Jazz Festival. The Festival drew over 10,000 people. By later that afternoon, the parking garage facing AstroTurf Plaza had become Silver Spring’s own La Scala Opera House.





**Figure 16: Ellsworth Ave, October 2005**

“Special “Activity of the Magical Montgomery Arts Festival takes place in the afternoon shadow of the neighboring buildings.



**Figure 17: Silver Circle, October 2005**  
Spontaneous watching of a dance performance at Magical Montgomery Arts Festival.



**Figure 18: Wayne Ave, looking East towards site**

Wayne Ave is the street parallel to Ellsworth Ave, one block south. This photo was taken on the day of “Magical Montgomery Arts Festival.”





**Figure 19: Corner of Fenton Street and Wayne Ave, looking at site from across street**  
Although this photo was taken on the day of the Magical Montgomery Arts Festival, the streetscape has a very different character than Ellsworth, one block North of site. .



**Figure 20: Site of the future Puppet Theater Workshop**

The site presently has two auto-body repair shops, a religious bookstore and Chinese-food shack.



**Figure 21: Site of the future Puppet Theater Workshop**  
One of the two auto-body repair shops on the site.

## **PART II: SITE ANALYSIS**

FENTON STREET VILLAGE:  
COMMUNITY OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Fenton Street Village is located south of Wayne Ave and the Core of the Central Business District, between Georgia Ave on the west and the CBD boundary on the east. Originally a single-family residential neighborhood, today it is a mix of multi-cultural shops, neighborhood-serving retail, business services, small office buildings and auto-related business. (fig. 30) Stores are supported by public parking lots and garages. The east side of Fenton Street, while commercial, is adjacent to a single-family residential neighborhood that should be buffered from redevelopment.<sup>23</sup>

The area contains a wide array of building styles, vacant lots and a selection of businesses that range from small retail and restaurants, to supermarkets to automotive-related services. Not all of the storefronts are filled and the area suffers from many of the same problems as the rest of Silver Spring, including crime, vacancies, a run-down appearance and fewer customers than the merchants would like.

Pedestrian traffic has declined due to a variety of real and perceived problems including lack of demand for the goods and services offered in Fenton Village,

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<sup>23</sup> Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan, p. 61.

inadequate pedestrian circulation, concerns about security, the ability to attract office workers from the nearby Core, and the area's deteriorating visual image.<sup>24</sup>

The area is also physically disjointed, due to a lack of significant renovation or infill development in recent years. While there are many public parking lots and garages in Fenton Village, some of them are not conveniently located or are unappealing to potential shoppers. (fig. 34) Some of these facilities could be redesigned, reused or relocated. The disjointed pattern of commercial activity and the lack of a resident population dilute pedestrian traffic- a key component to retail vitality.<sup>25</sup>

Property owners have had little incentive to renovate. Past depressed commercial rents did not generate a return on investment through increased rental rates. Lease terms were shorter and landlords were not providing the tenant improvements typically included in longer leases.<sup>26</sup>

In 1997, Montgomery County proposed bringing in the National Main Street Program-part of the National Historic Trust for Historic Preservation. The program focuses on strengthening business by marketing the area with special events, economic development programs and façade improvements to help revitalize the area.<sup>27</sup> Residents and Business owners of Fenton Street argued that the problems of Fenton Street Village were deeper than just outside appearances. The 1993 revision of the master plan had reduced the density of their zoning, in order to "preserve the character of the area", but had the adverse effect of keeping the businesses from making any addition on their

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

<sup>27</sup> Rothman, Sheri. "Safety, not Streetscaping is key for Fenton St," Silver Spring Gazette, March 5, 1997, p. A-3.

property. The 1997 revision to the Central Business District zoning code proposed an overlay zone for portions of Fenton Village, allowing increased density, expanded uses, open space transfer incentives and specific building heights.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Silver Spring Central Business District Sector plan, p.34

SURROUNDING VICINITY:  
CORNER OF FENTON AND WAYNE

The site located at the south-west corner of Fenton Ave and Wayne Ave at the northern edge of Fenton Street Village. The site is within the CBD-1 Zone in downtown Silver Spring. The site is surrounded by CBD-2 property to the west toward Georgia Ave for the properties fronting Wayne Ave. The properties directly south of the site are zoned CBD-1, consisting of a mix of building types and structures. Past the CBD zones to the east is R-60 zoning. The site of the puppet theater workshop as well as the properties to the south are within the Fenton Village Overlay Zone and consist of a mix of retail and commercial buildings. Located to the North, is the downtown Silver Spring project consisting of eight-level commercial retail buildings along the Wayne Ave and Georgia Ave frontage, with the retail portion on the first two levels. Directly across from the subject property is an eleven-story hotel site adjacent to a seven-level county parking garage. The properties currently on the site are comprised of primarily existing one and two-story retail and commercial buildings. The property directly to the west of the site is a fourteen story “L” shaped building with residential units starting on the second floor. The maximum height of 143 feet conforms to the CBD-2 Zone. Outdoor seating for the retail space has been designated on the site plan.



The site consists of seven recorded lots. The property has concrete sidewalks along the Wayne and Fenton St frontage. The present structures on the site include a Chinese food shack, an auto repair shop and a residential house converted to the “Moose Lodge,” and two-story residential buildings converted into small shops serving local clientele, including an Ethiopian book store, hairdresser and auto-repair shop. The topography on the property slopes from north to south by approximately 13 feet. The high point of the site is at the northwest corner adjacent to Wayne Avenue, gently sloping towards the south.

Directly south of the site, across Bonifant St, Lofts-24 is a 4-story, sixty foot residential building currently under construction. The sidewalks on the west side of Fenton and the south side of Wayne are 13’-4”. Wayne Ave is a 5-lane road measuring 48’ curb to curb and Fenton is a 4 lane road measuring 43’ in width, curb to curb. The block bound by Fenton, Wayne, Bonifant and Georgia Ave measures 272’ by 742’.

**Figure 31: Corridors and Gateways Diagram. Georgia Ave and Colesville Road are the primary corridors for the area. Site highlighted in pink**

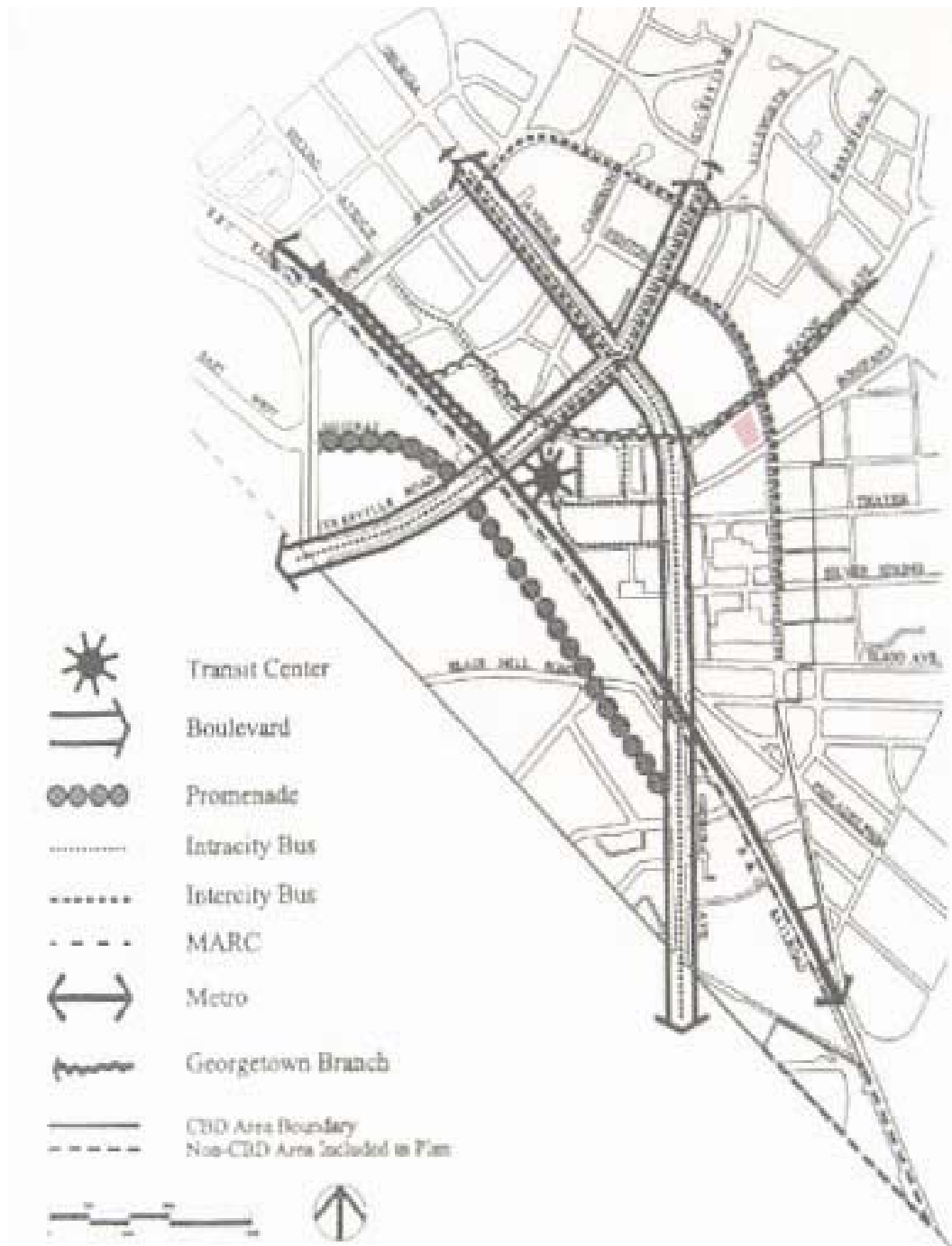
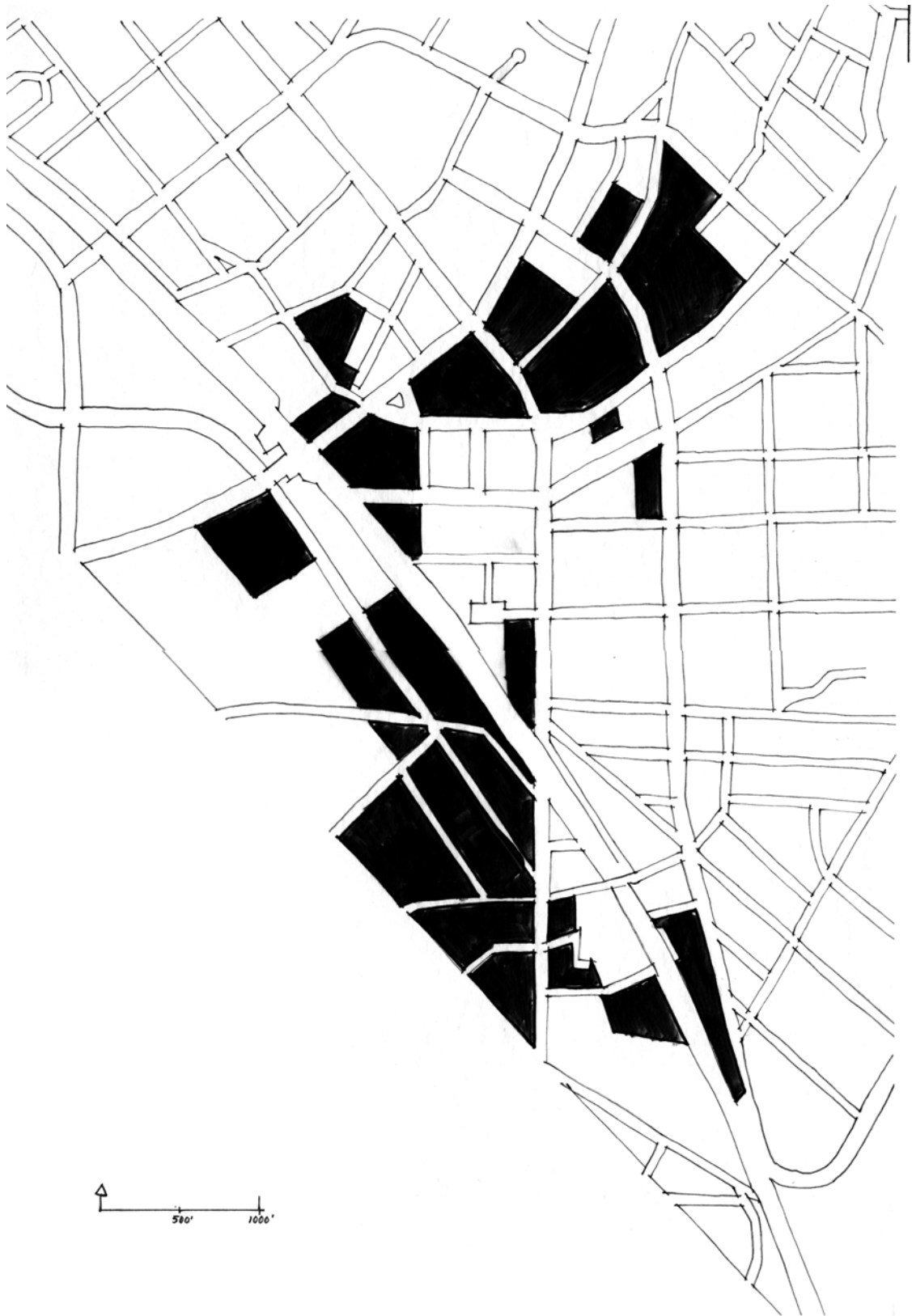


Figure 22: Modes of Transportation Diagram





**Figure 24: Recent Redevelopment, 1995-2005**



**Figure 25: Zoning Plan**





**Figure 26: Land Use Diagram**



**Figure 27: Pedestrian Activity Map (Everyday)**

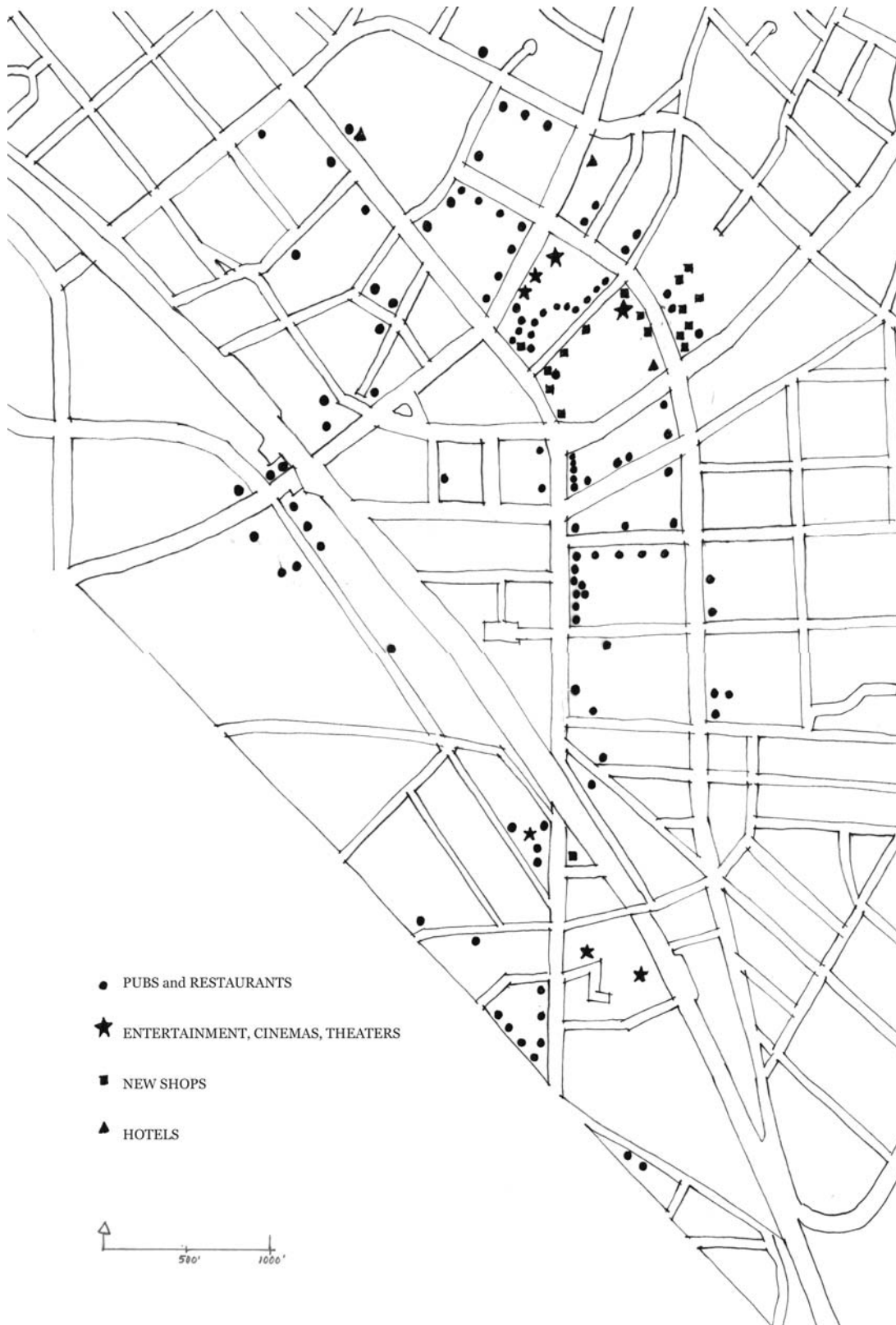
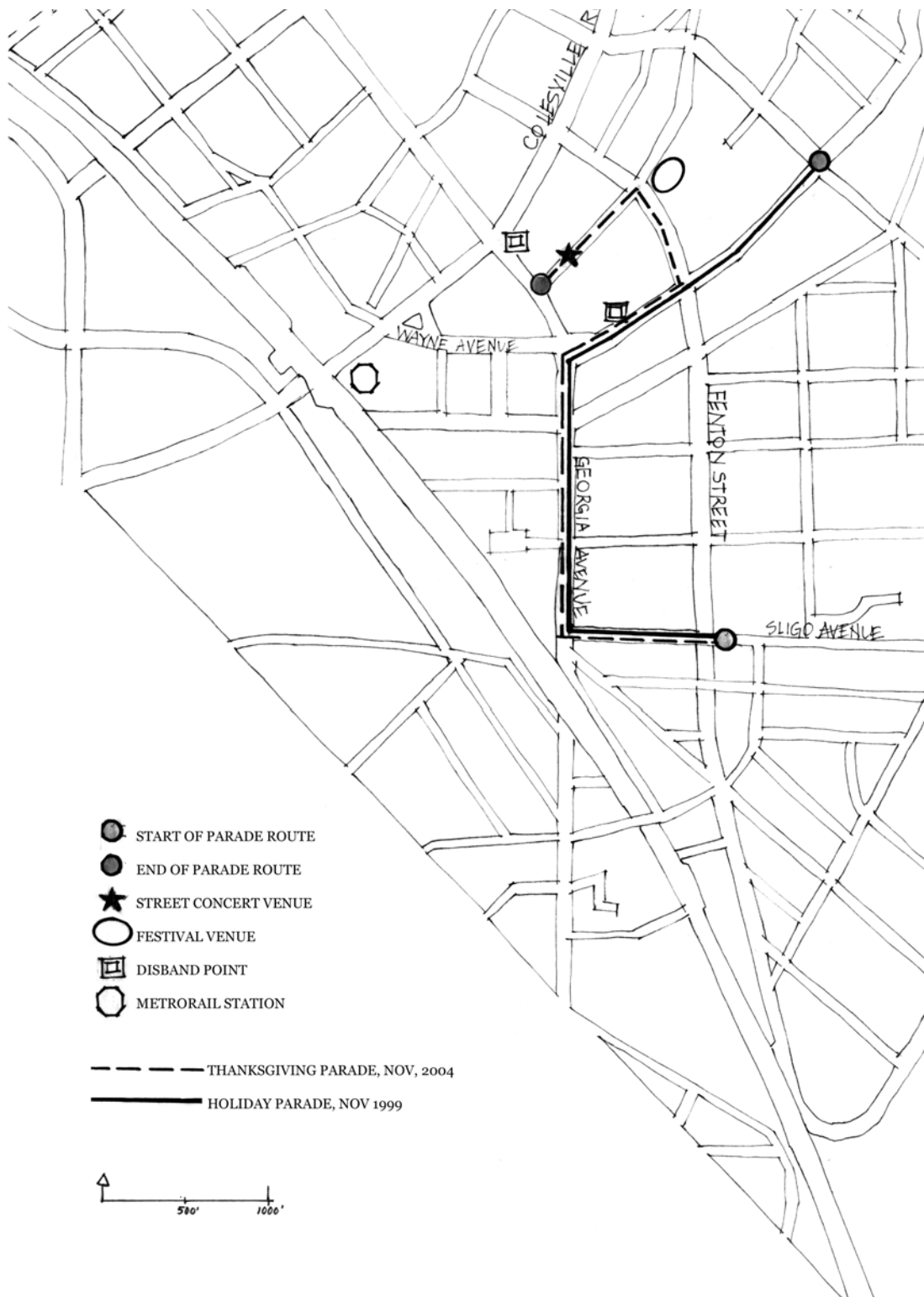


Figure 28: "Night Map"





**Figure 29: Parade Route/Pedestrian Activity (Special)**



**Figure 30: 2002 Aerial Photo of site of the future Puppet Theater Workshop.**  
Photo shows old street pattern, before redevelopment. The parking-retail block North of Wayne had not yet been built. The area South of Wayne Ave, has remained unchanged from this photo.



**Figure 31: Present conditions of the site of the future Puppet Theater Workshop**

### PART III: PRECEDENT STUDIES

THE SCIENCE PLAYGROUND; BOSTON CHILDREN’S MUSEUM,  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The Science Playground allows children to learn through the act of playing. The exhibits engage the child’s curiosity by exposing unseen parts of the architecture. For example, the “window wall” exposes the bathroom plumbing by thoughtfully inserting a window into the wall at a low height.

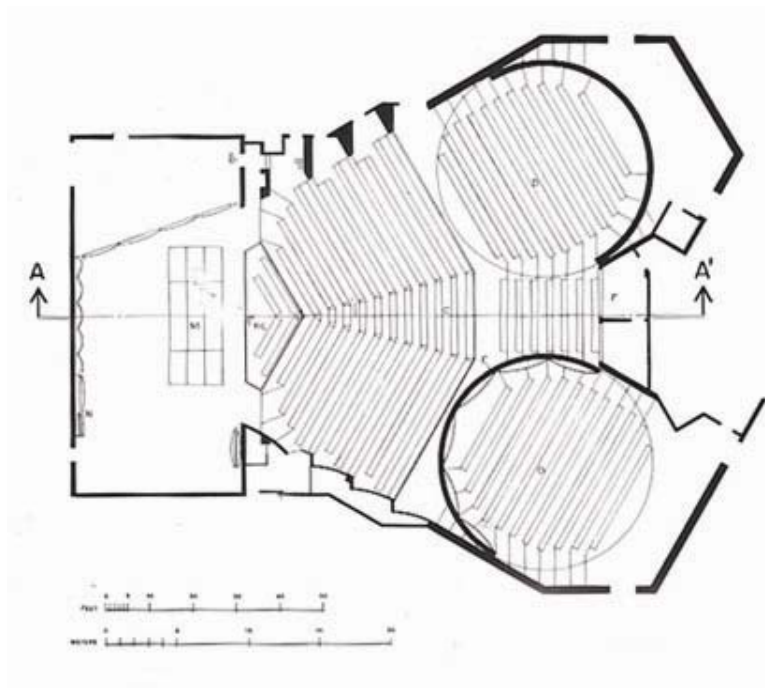


**Figure 32: The Science Playground, Boston Children’s Museum, Boston, Mass.**  
All exhibit spaces are accessed from a central space and are partitioned with glazed walls for better adult supervision.

## ELYRIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE THEATER,

### ELYRIA, OHIO

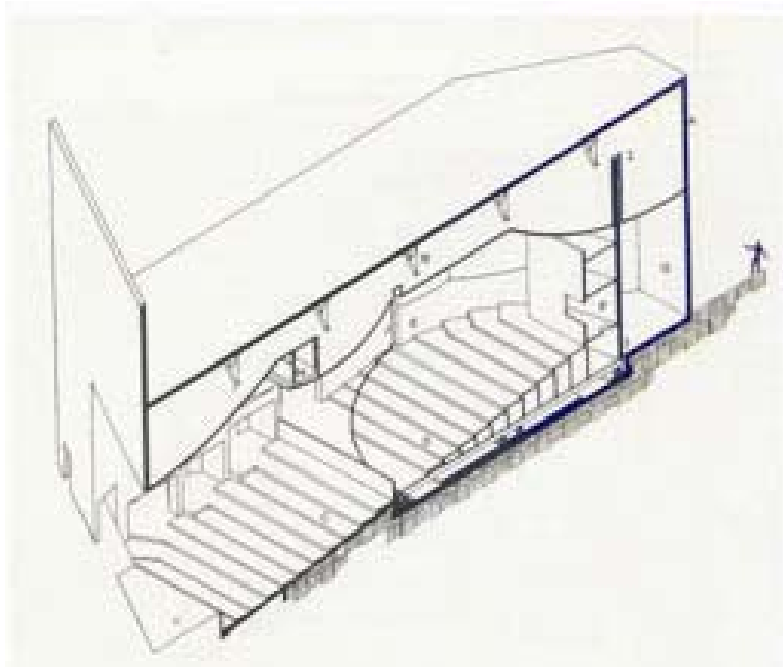
The Community College Theater's audience sits on a "lazy Susan" style, turn-table platform, allowing increased flexibility in size and number of theaters. Acoustical paneled walls are attached to the back of the turn-table platform. Depending on the requirements of the play, the turn-table platforms can turn to create one large theater, or one medium and two small.



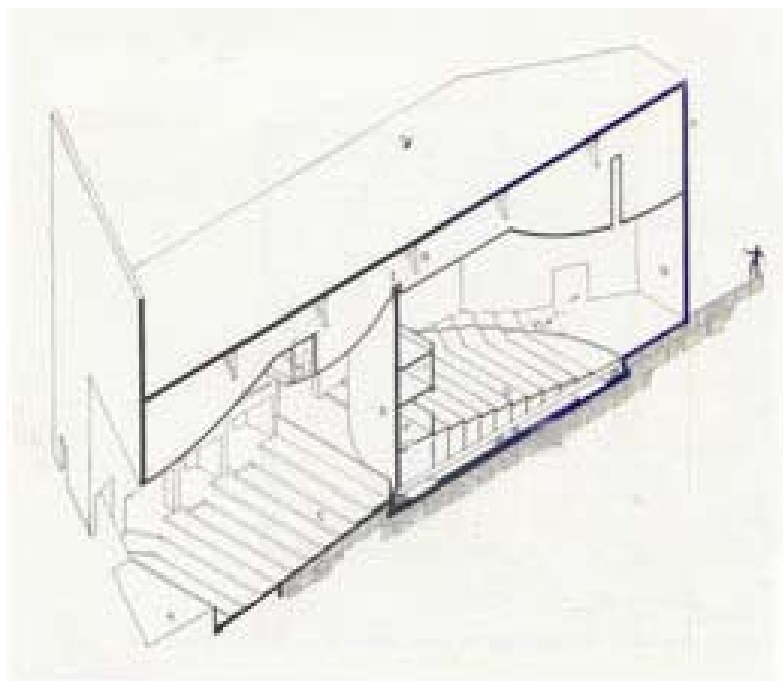
**Figure 33: Elyria Community College Theater Plan**

Plan demonstrates the multiple arrangements of seating.





**Figure 34: Axonometric diagram of Elyria Community College Theater**  
 Lazy susan platform is rotated to create one large theater audience space

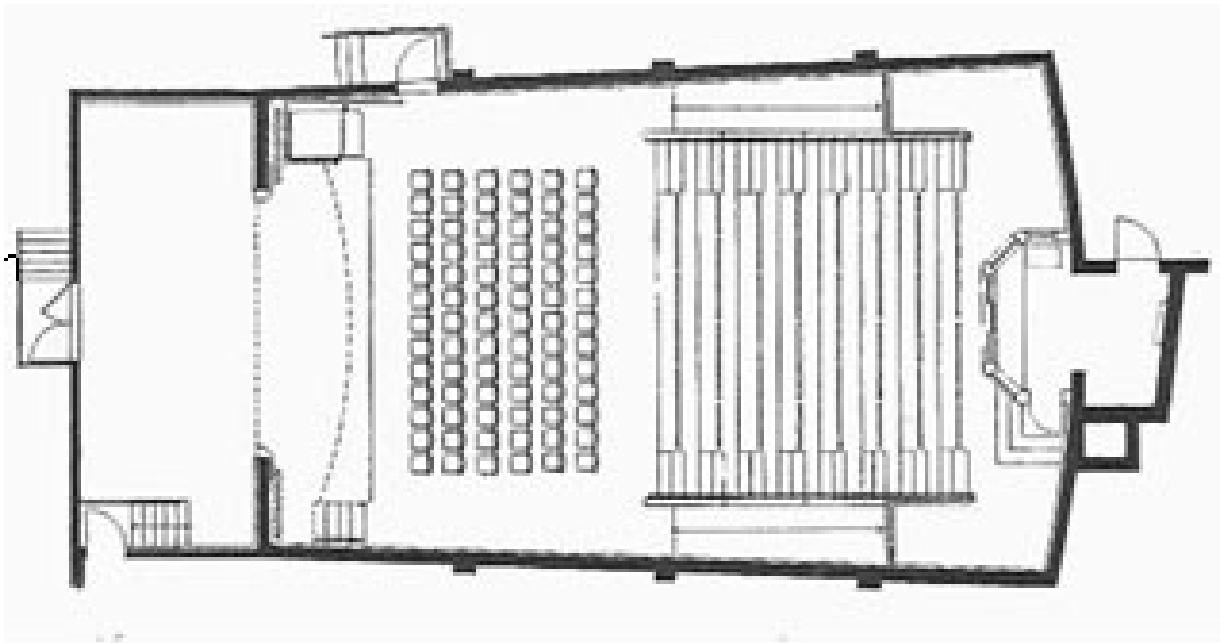


**Figure 35: Axonometric diagram of Elyria Community College Theater**  
 Lazy susan platform is rotated to create two small audience spaces.

## RANDALL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM THEATER

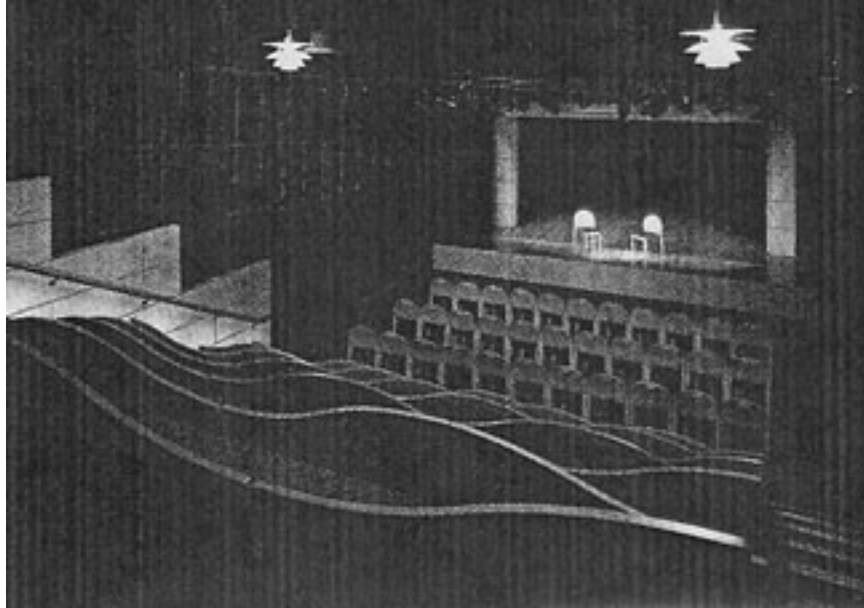
### SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Small by grown-up theater standards, this children's theater seats 150 people. The Randall Children's Museum theater has individual seats for 78 people in front, and raked seating for 77 in the back. A similar sized theater would be appropriate for watching shows with oversize, or shadow puppets, however the raked seating creates sight-line problems for hand-and-rod, Bunraku and marionettes. This theater is detailed with deep-violet kid-proof carpeting on the floor and walls, complemented with birch furniture.

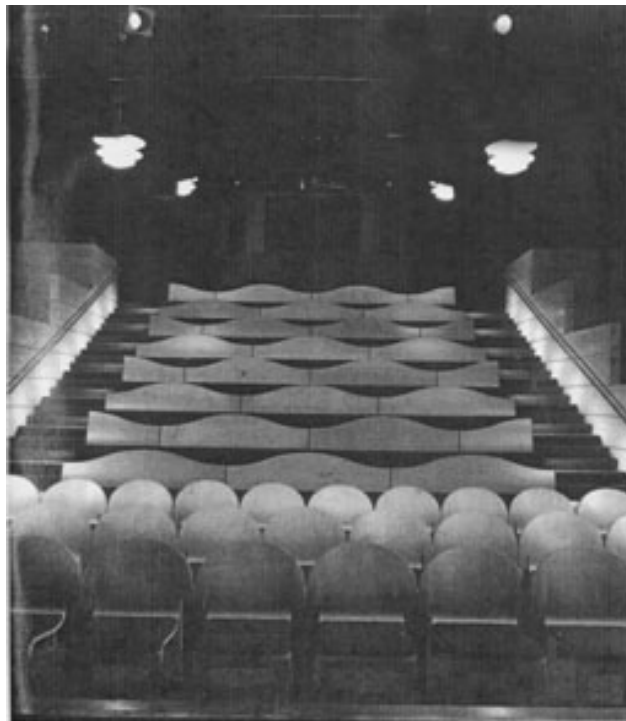


**Figure 36: Plan of Randall Children's Theater**





**Figure 37: Interior view of Randall Children's Theater**



**Figure 38: Interior View of Randall Children's Theater**

## PART IV: SPECIAL ISSUES AND DESIGN STRATEGIES

## DESIGNING FOR CHILDREN

Designing from the Child's perspective, everything is an interactive surface with the potential to be sculpted, painted, draped or molded artistically. Craft, from the hands and hearts of designers, trades people, artisans and care-givers can counterbalance mass-production. It can transform raw materials into substances of spirit and beauty. Then a space is "alive," and its qualities beckon the senses to play and to respond.

### CHILDREN'S FOUR BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS

#### ***1. An Environment that Encourages Movement***

A key design requirement is to allow children the greatest possible variety of large muscle movement, both indoors and out. The entire ambience should offer an invitation to move within safe and tolerable limits. Motion permits children to locate themselves freely in space, create their own boundaries, access diverse territories, and explore their abilities.<sup>29</sup>

If restricted too much, children become frustrated and their attempts to learn are diverted into inappropriate expression- they fidget in their seats or incessantly try to gain

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<sup>29</sup> Olds, Anita Rui. *Child care design guide*, page 8

access to prohibited materials. Spaces designed for large muscle activity can resolve the tension between children's needs to move and adult's needs to organize the movement.<sup>30</sup>

## ***2. An Environment that Supports Comfort***

When children feel comfortable in their physical surroundings, they will venture to explore materials or events around them. Our sense organs are designed to detect changes in stimulation rather than to monitor a steady state of constant input. They require movement and change, even though the built environment tends to be static and unchangeable. Dramatic fluctuations in stimulation level can be frightening and disorienting, patterns of movement that are moderately diverse help us maintaining optimal levels of responsiveness and make us feel comfortable.

Comfortable settings provide neither too much sameness nor too much contrast, but what Fiske and Maddi call "difference-within-sameness"<sup>31</sup>. Nature best exemplifies this difference-within-sameness concept, providing us with our most comforting experiences-wafting breezes, babbling brooks, sunlight dancing on leaves. Children also appreciate, and need to have, extensive experiences outdoors.

By contrast, over- or under-arousing levels of sensory stimulation present-long lightless corridors, cold tile floors, glaring fluorescent lights, artwork hung indiscriminately; bright chaotic, colors and patterns everywhere-exacerbate feelings of disease. When designing spaces for children, we should include variation in architectural elements such as scale, floor height, ceiling height, and lighting, the variety in the texture of finish materials, and the presence of soft elements.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, page 9

<sup>31</sup> DW Fiske and S.R. Maddi. Functions of Varied Experience Dorsey; 1961

### ***3. An Environment that Fosters Competence***

Children need to feel successful in negotiating the world around them, however their immaturity and small size constantly force them to confront intimidating and frustrating experiences. A supportive environment helps children fulfill their own needs, execute tasks easily, manage their own tools and materials, and control their own movements from place to place.<sup>32</sup>

- A variety of things to do can assure that children will find things at which they can succeed and through which they can reveal themselves.
- A variety of places in which to do them will reduce the overall scale of the room and group, and help children perceive the possibilities and limits of each activity.
- Well organized and accessible things and places. To invite child use, help focus attention, clarify ideas and support possibilities for execution.

### ***4. An Environment that Encourages a Sense of Control***

Certain design tactics can assist in maintaining a balance between access to the child and the child's need for privacy. Like adults, children suffer when possibilities for retreat are not available. Window seats, platforms, cubbyholes, fiberboard barrels with cutouts and small enclosures provide idea spots to get away from it all.

A well designed center is “decipherable” by a child. For example, upon entering a room, the first thing a child wants to know is: “How did I get in here? How do I get out? What other spaces is this space connected to?” Boxlike rooms with few connections, or

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<sup>32</sup> Olds, Anita Rui. *Child care design*, page 10

womblike enclosures that create too much environmental protection, are as distracting and unsettling as too much physical stimulation or visual input; children feel cut off from things around them. Spaces designed to support predictability often involve a vista or an elevated position. This is one reason why lofts and changes in level can be valuable. A building whose scale is small, designed as a cluster of spaces is more interpretable than one consisting of many rooms off long corridors. Predictability also can be increased by using interior windows or walls of glass, by keeping boundaries low partially transparent, with well-modulated lighting and sound.

Solidity at one's back is another essential of environmental control. Adults instinctively place their own chairs and desks against a wall or in a protected corner, but they often leave children vulnerable in the more exposed areas such as on the floor in the middle of the room. For children to experience a sense of safety and control, they need to sit so their backs are against the walls in the room's most protected places.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp.11-12.

## PART V: THE PUPPET THEATER WORKSHOP



## PROGRAMME

SITE	39,350 sq. ft.
1. PUPPET ALLEY	10,300
2. GRASS AMPITHEATER	5,800

### FIRST FLOOR

1. MAIN LOBBY	
A. Vestibule	250
B. Box Offices	200
C. Main Stair	250
D. Wheelchair Room	150
E. Circulation	1400
2. PUPPET EXHIBITION SPACE	1600
3. GIFT SHOP	875
A. Displays	700
B. Register Counter	150
C. Storage	100
4. LITTLE THEATER (Hand Puppet)	
A. Floor Seating	400
B. Light Box	150
C. Backstage	250
D. Storage	100
5. SCENIC WORKSHOP OBSERVATORY	500
6. PUPPET INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT	
A. Poché for Animatronic Puppets	200
B. Poché for Human Puppeteers	300
C. Children's Garden (Outdoor Room)	700
D. Exhibit Floor Space	1850
E. Storage	250
7. SCENIC SHOP	
A. Open Work Area	1600
B. Paint/Tool Storage Closet	250
C. Loading Dock Service Area	650
8. OUTDOOR STAGE	
A. Stage	725
B. Side stage	700
C. Backstage	360

9. HANDS-ON PUPPET MAKING EXHIBIT	
A. Worktable Area	800
B. Washing Area	50
C. Display/Storage	450
D. Exhibit Floor Space	950
E. Material Storage	300
F. Restroom	50
10. MISCELLANEOUS	
A. Public Restrooms	750
B. Mechanical	500
C. Elevator	200
 BASEMENT	
1. Mechanical Area	1000
2. Scenery Storage	1450
3. Hydraulic Lift Operator Area	1000
 FIRST FLOOR MEZZANINE	
1. Office	1000
2. Actor Preparation Area	
A. Dressing Rooms	800
B. Costume Storage	600
C. Make-Up	400
D. Showers/Restroom	400
 SECOND FLOOR	
1. Theater Lobby	2650
2. Public Balcony	2000
3. Giant Puppet Workshop	
A. Open Work space	2000
B. Storage	500
C. Workshop Balcony	450
4. Movement Studio/Rehearsal Space #1	2100
5. Puppet Theater (Hand and Rod)	
A. Public Entrance Sound lock	275
B. Audience Seating	850
C. Stage	375
D. Side stage	400
E. Backstage	400
F. Private Entry Sound lock	350
G. Storage	350
H. Fly Gallery for First Floor Stage	600

## SECOND FLOOR MEZZANINE

Light and Sound Control Room for Hand/Rod Theater	250
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## THIRD FLOOR

1. Public Balcony (Indoor)	900
2. Puppet Theater (Marionette)	
A. Public Entrance Sound lock	150
B. Audience Seating	750
C. Stage	275
D. Side stage	275
E. Backstage	500
F. Private Entry Sound lock	300
G. Storage	400
H. Fly Gallery for Second Floor Theater	450
3. Movement Studio/Rehearsal Space #2	2100
4. Private Balcony (Outdoor)	150

## FOURTH FLOOR

1. Puppet Workshop	
A. Open Work Area	2850
B. Materials Storage	1000
C. Puppet-In-Progress Storage	500
D. Finished Puppet Storage	200
E. Restrooms	200
2. Roof Terrace	6000

## PUPPET CIRCULATION



SECTION A-A

**Figure 39: Section A-A, showing puppet circulation through the Puppet Theater Workshop**  
 Touring the building from the Top floor down, we may follow the puppet's life; from its creation, rehearsal, performance, through its exhibition and dismantling.

Fourth Floor: Puppet Workshop

Third Floor: Rehearsal Studio

Second Floor: Theater Lobby, Giant Puppet Workshop

First Floor: Lobby /Puppet Exhibit, Hands-on Puppet Making exhibits

## HUMAN CIRCULATION



**Figure 40: Section B-B showing, Human Circulation through the Puppet Theater Workshop**  
Starting from the first floor up, we may trace the steps for a human visitor to the Puppet Theater Workshop.

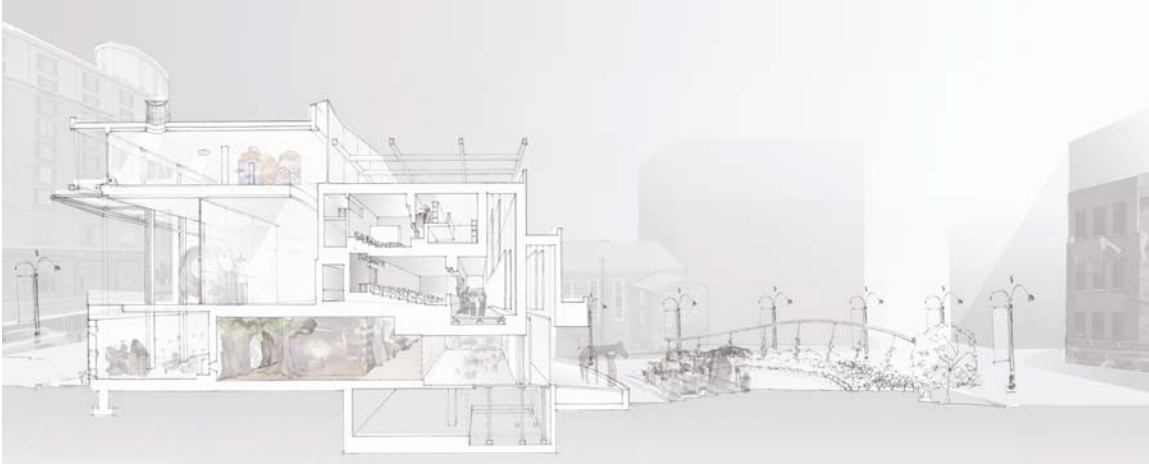
First Floor: Puppet Exhibit, Little Theater, Children's Interactive Exhibit, Outdoor Play Room,

Second Floor: Public Outdoor Balcony, Hand and Rod Puppet Theater, Movement Studio #1

Third Floor: Marionette Theater, Movement studio #2

Fourth Floor: Puppet Workshop, Outdoor Terrace and Roof Garden

## HUMAN/PUPPET INTERACTION



**Figure 41: Section C-C, showing spaces of Human/Puppet Interaction**

From the Outside in, back to outside (Right to Left), we may understand the different ways humans and puppets view and interact with each other inside (and outside of) the Puppet Theater Workshop.

Ways of Viewing:

Amphitheater- Indoor/Outdoor Stage

Back Stage/Scenic and Prop Shop- Observation Path

Puppet Theater audience- Puppet performers

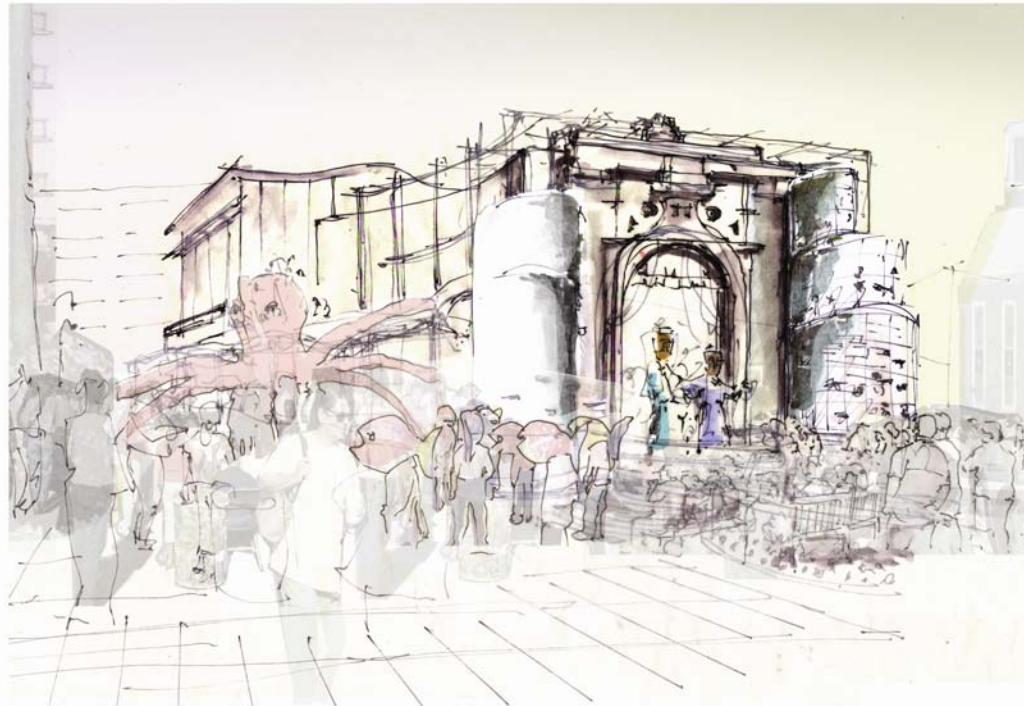
Children/puppet interactive exhibits

Hands-on Puppet Making exhibits

Theater Lobby- Giant Puppet Workshop

Street- Giant Puppet Workshop

**THE EVERYDAY AND THE SPECIAL**



SATURDAYS AT PUPPET ALLEY

**Figure 42: Perspective envisioning "Everyday" activity**

In this drawing, we see people gathered to watch a giant puppet show on the outdoor Stage, People walking down Puppet Alley, Kids from a puppet-making class showing off their new eight-legged creation, and younger kids from a movement studio class in rehearsal.

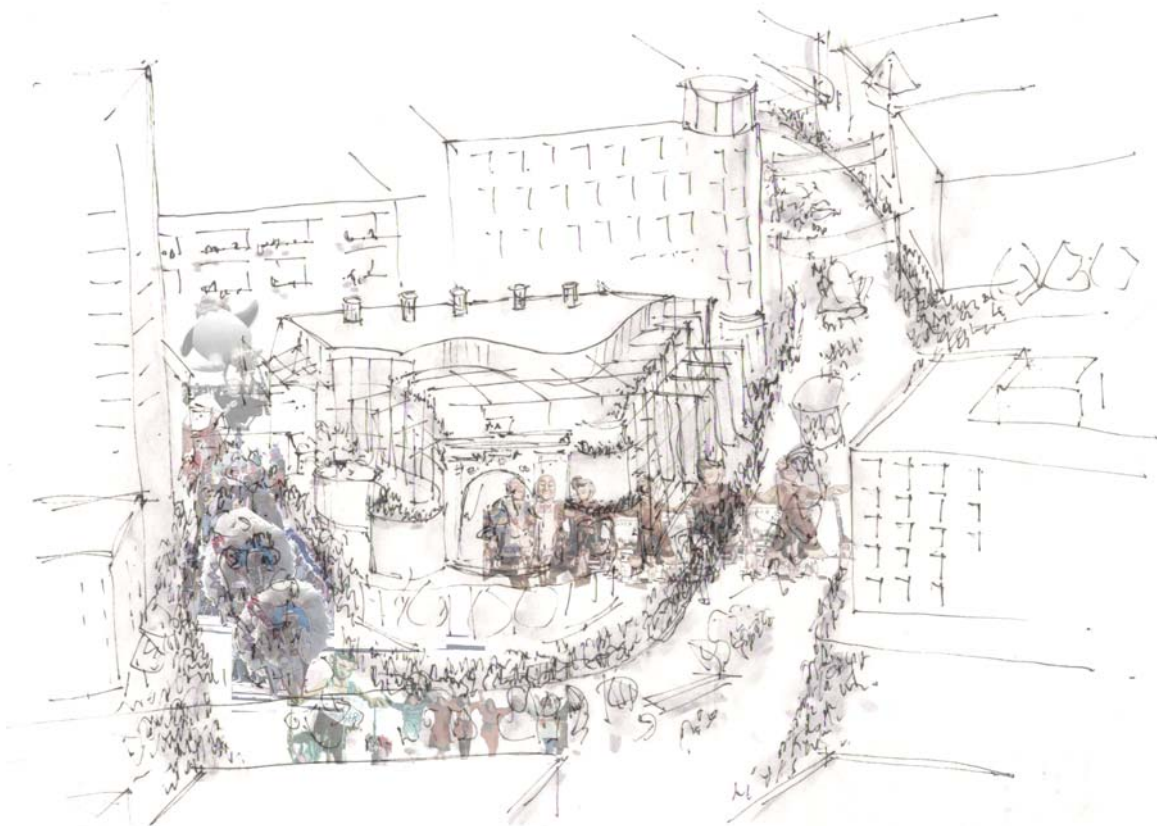




## FESTIVAL MORNING

**Figure 43: Perspective showing the "special" activity on the morning of festival day**

This drawing illustrates how on the morning of the festival, the “Marionette Leg Wall” opens up, and with pulleys, the giant puppet penguin is hoisted up, out of the workshop, and onto street level.



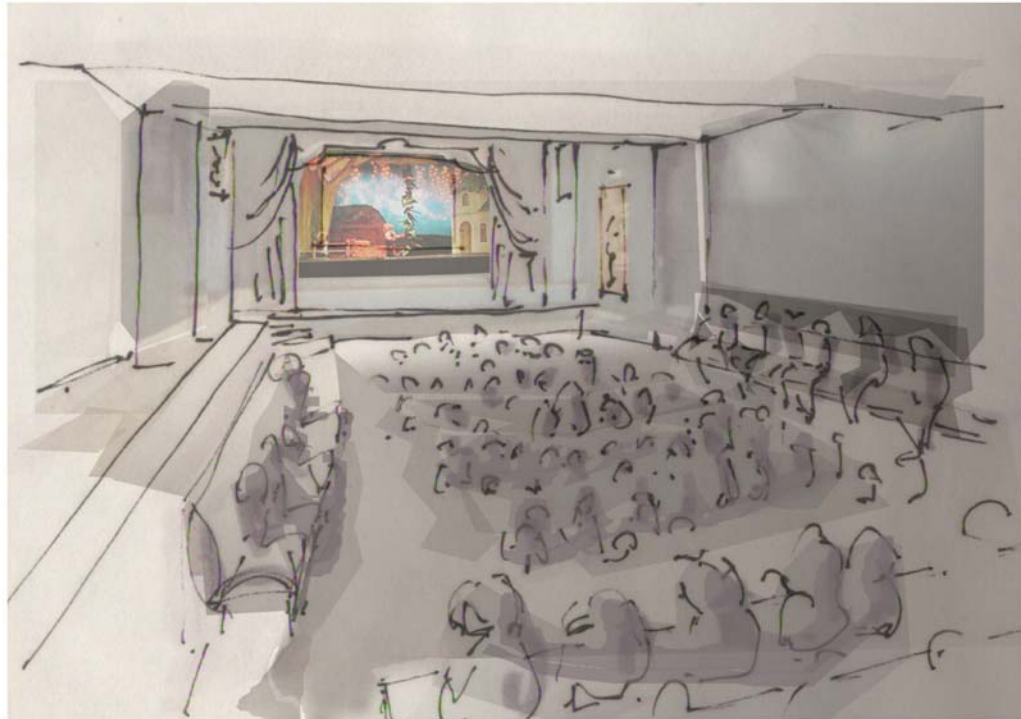
**Figure 44: "Parade down Puppet Alley"**

This drawing shows an aerial view of the Puppet Theater Workshop during the festival Parade. Giant puppets bust out of the building to join the parade.



## INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

**Figure 45: Traditional and Animatronic Puppets interact with unsuspecting visitors**  
This exhibit makes special out of the everyday.



PUPPET THEATER

**Figure 46: View of the Marionette Puppet Theater from the audience**



BACKSTAGE

**Figure 47: Backstage during a Shadow Puppet Performance**



FESTIVAL DAY AT PUPPET ALLEY

**Figure 48: View of Festival Parade**

## PART VI: FINAL DRAWINGS

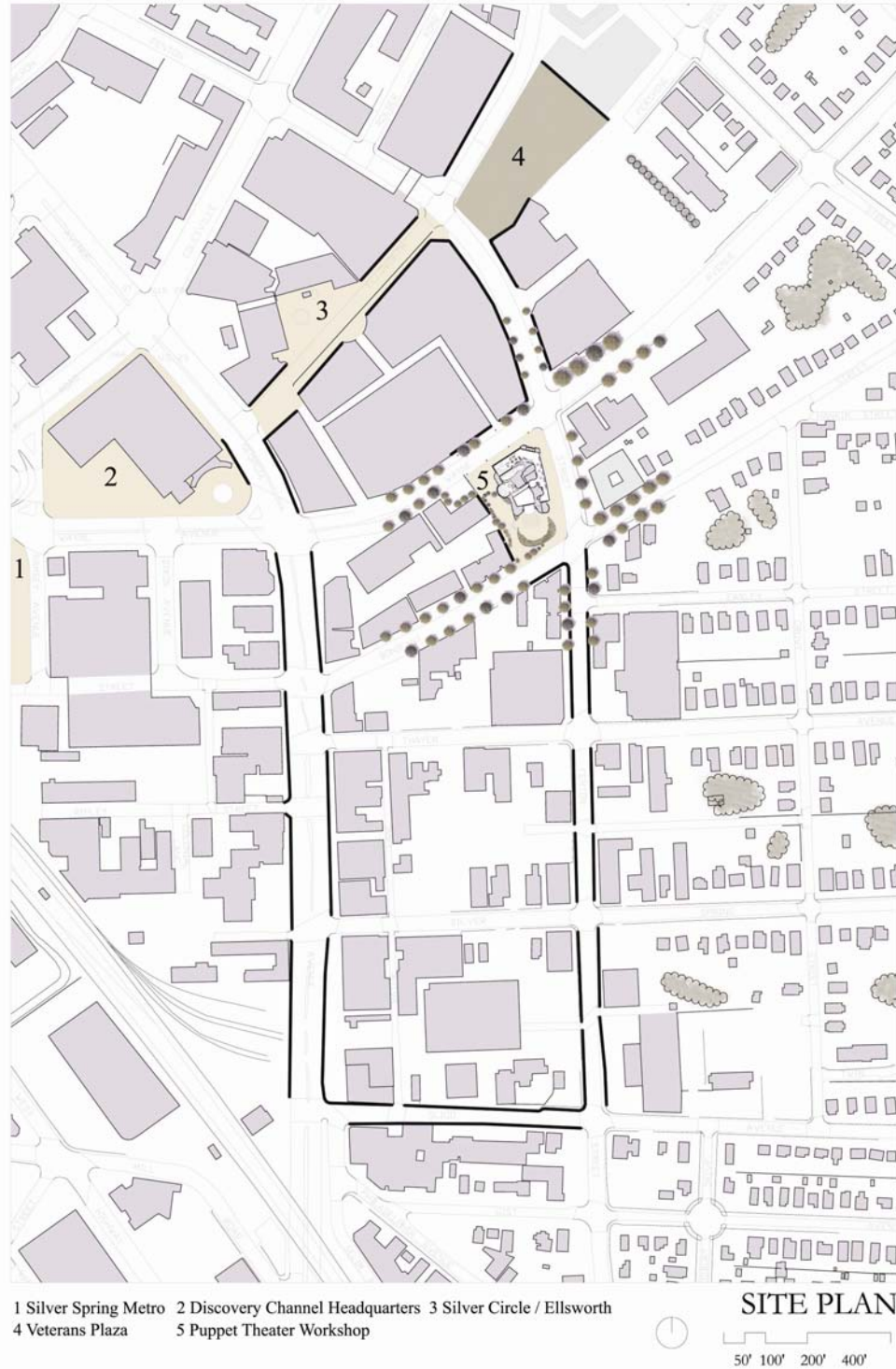


## SPIRIT OF PLACE

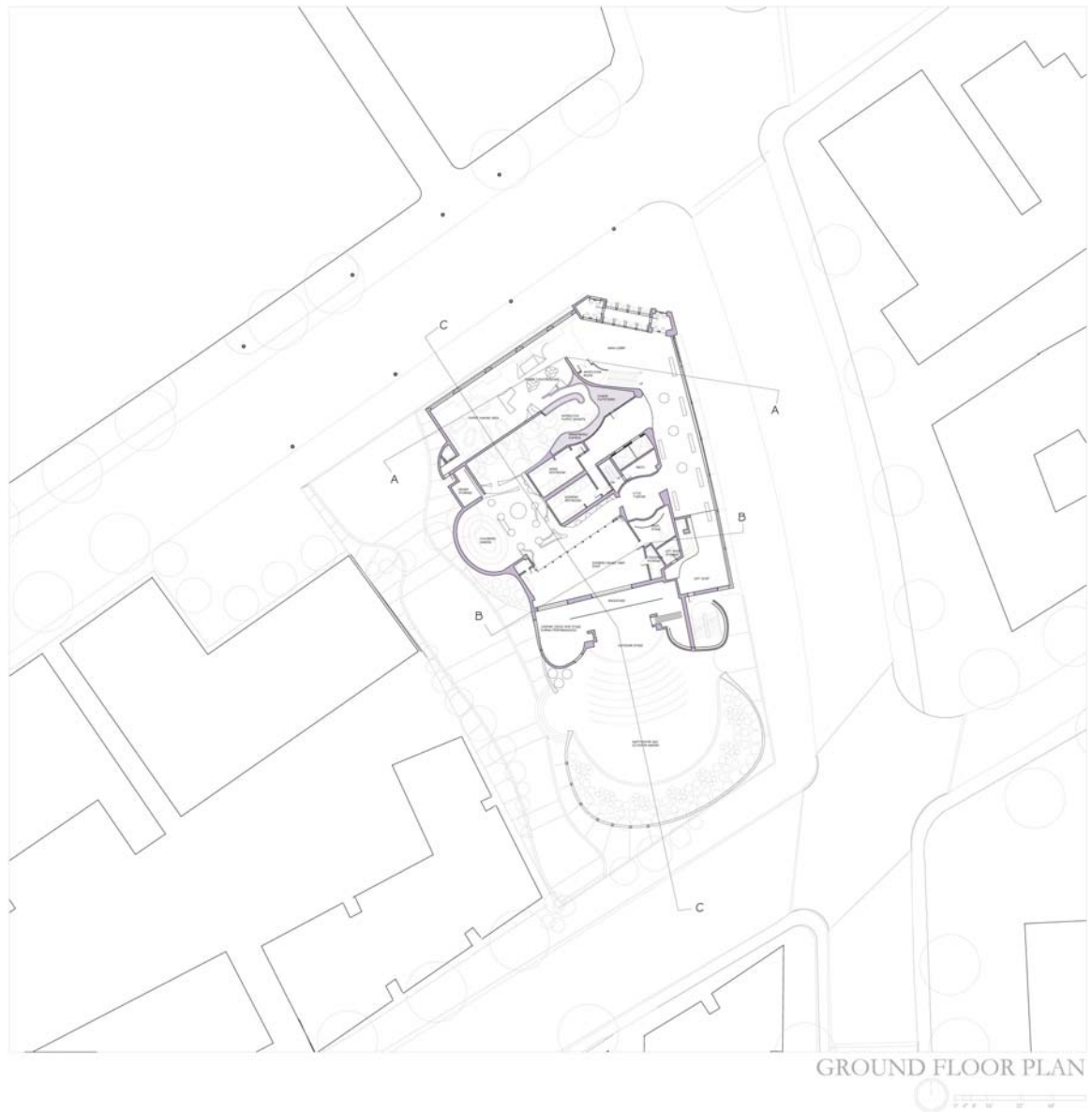
The aspiration of the Puppet Theater Workshop is to create a positive impact on the unique needs of the community by fostering self-expression in participants, encouraging a sense of ownership and pride in their work and community. It will be a model for future community art centers by being sustainable and available to the community, a part of the neighborhood, a place that is safe, comfortable, and supportive.

The Puppet Theater Workshop will be a place of wonder and delight where the enchantments and mysteries of childhood can be given full expression. It will possess the spirit of a place that makes it feel memorable, that expands our sense of possibility, and puts us in touch with that is most creative and human about ourselves.

## FINAL DRAWINGS



**Figure 49: Site Plan**



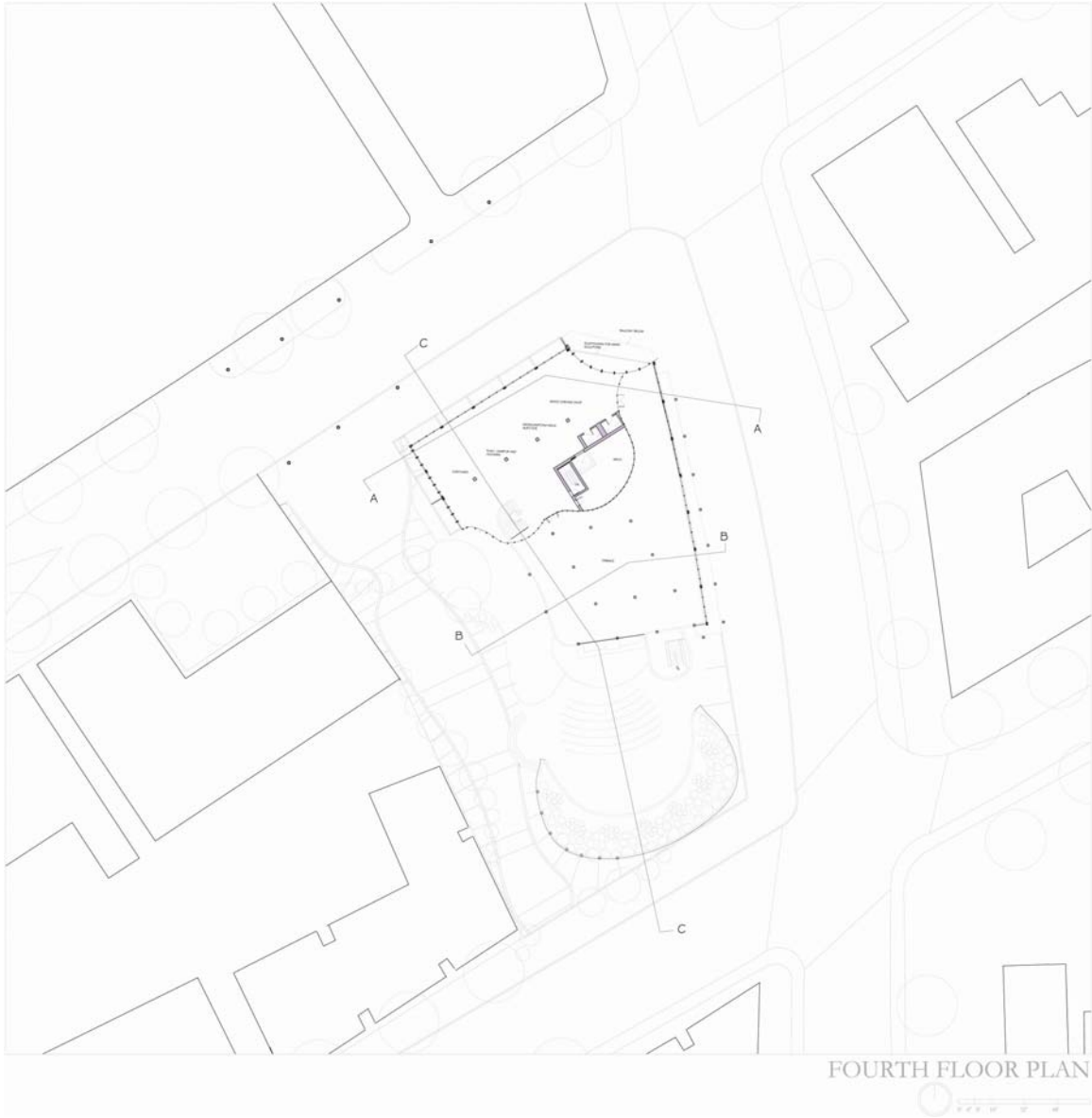
**Figure 50: Ground Floor Plan**



**Figure 51: Second Floor Plan**



**Figure 52: Third Floor Plan**

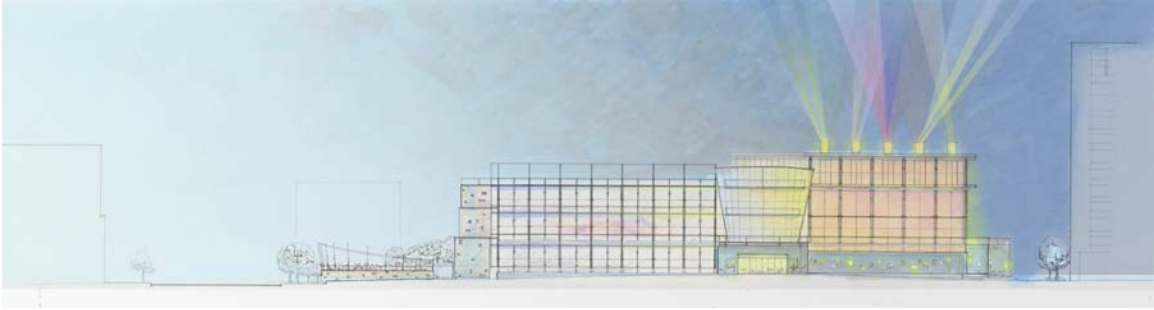


**Figure 53: Fourth Floor Plan**





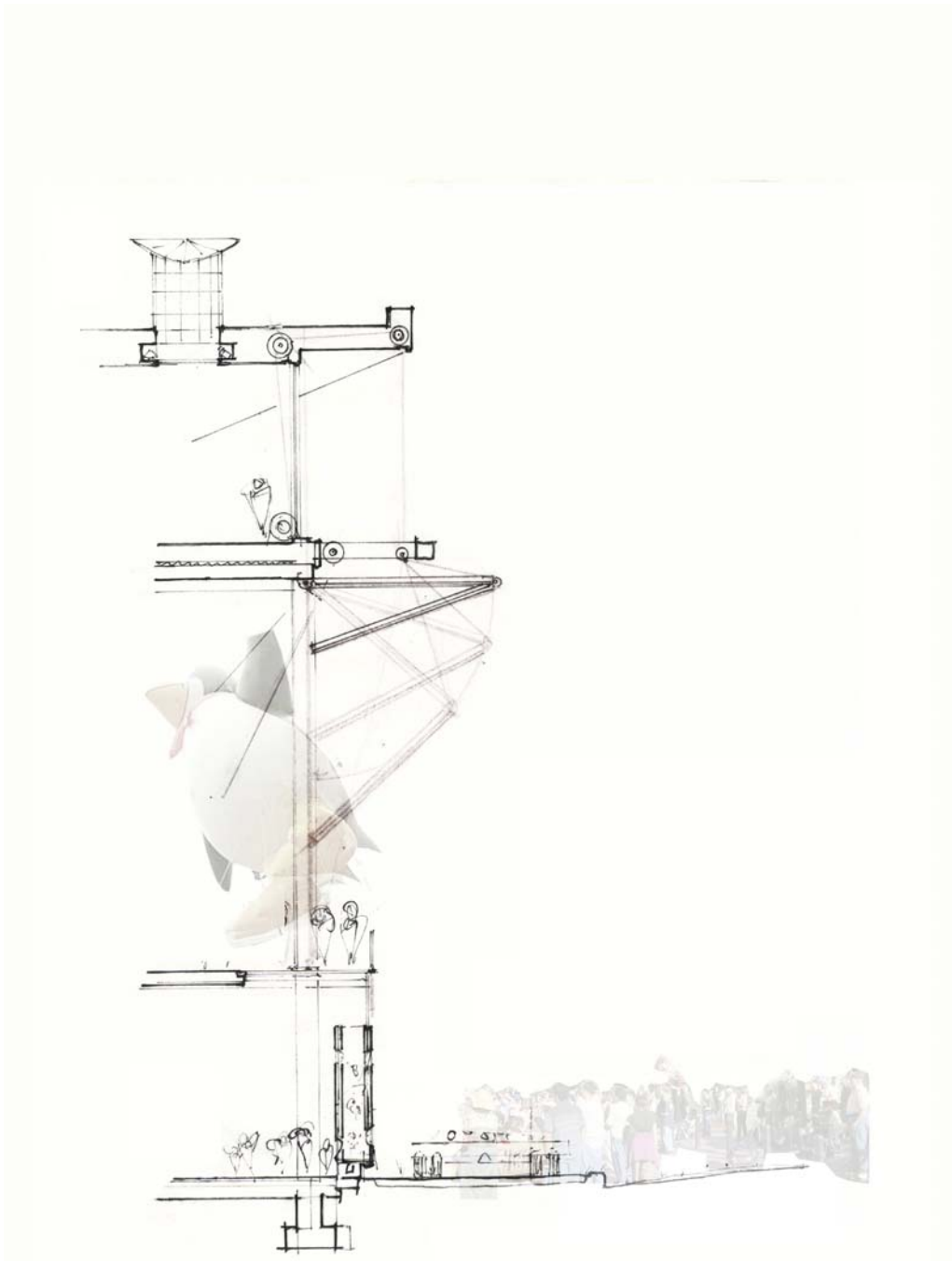
**Figure 54: Roof Plan**



**Figure 55: Fenton Street and Wayne Avenue Elevations Combined**



**Figure 56: Bonifant Street and Puppet Alley Elevations Combined**



**Figure 57: Wall Section through Wayne Avenue Facade**

## APPENDIX A

### TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW:

MRS. MARY JOHNSON, SMALL-BUSINESS OWNER

FENTON STREET VILLAGE

**SB:** “Miss Johnson, how long have you been on Fenton St?”

**MJ:** “Since 1986.”

**SB:** “Small business owners like you have been keeping Silver Spring alive for many years, through all the economic ups and downs.”

**MJ:** “I tend to agree.” (Laughs)

**SB:** “Have you found a new place to relocate the store?”

**MJ:** “Not yet. I’m looking for a small space, [between 800 and 1300sq ft] and they seem to be in short supply. Most places [in the downtown Silver Spring area] are too big or too expensive for a small store such as mine. I looked at an empty site on Bonifant Street, but it was too costly, I found out. And I missed by a day signing the lease for a spot in the Chevy Chase building. There was an old video store on Georgia Avenue, but

my customers wouldn't be able to find a spot close to a parking lot or on the street in a safe area. ”

**SB:** “I’ve read that the county might offer a small business development fund to a landlord with a large site, asking the landlord to divide the space for several businesses.”

**MJ:** “Landlords don’t feel right about splitting up their property into smaller parcels of land.”

**SB:** “What about other places, like in the district, or Bethesda, or Rockville?”

**MJ:** “I’ve been looking at possible sites in the District, where I really don’t want to go. I’d still like to be a part of the community in which I live. You just don’t know how unsettling this is. What I’m concerned about now, after I’ve gotten over the shock of having to move, is how will I survive in a new location?”

**SB:** “Has the County promised to compensate you or help you re-establish the shop at a new location?”

**MJ:** “They are not very flexible in meeting our [the small business owners] needs. But they’ve promised me 20,000 dollars. They mean well, but we want extra help finding a new site. They [Montgomery County] mean well, but every time you move, you lose somebody. I may go to a community and find that they hate my style. You can’t tell that on the surface. It’s going to be like starting over again. I’m not trying to talk bad about the county...but the money is not good enough.”

**SB:** “Has the revitalization affected your business so far?”

**MJ:** “These changes [in downtown Silver Spring] should have happened 5 or 10 years ago. It was too slow in coming, and dragged the businesses and the community down with it. The plan they talked about 15 years ago was to make Silver Spring the gateway to Montgomery County.”

**SB:** “You don’t think they’ve been successful?”

**MJ:** “Yes, but it was a good 10 years too late...”

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**SB:** “...the County has been making efforts to revitalize Fenton Village through the ‘Main Street Program’, which would designate Fenton Street as a historic landmark, so money will be allocating to improving the area. Improvements are purely cosmetic, like adding street trees, and benches, fixing signs, adding street lamps...”

**MJ:** “Those things all would be very nice, but what we (the small business owners in Fenton Street Village) need is safe streets and free parking for our customers.”

**SB:** “Which encourages more street traffic and more business?”

**MJ:** “Ellsworth [Avenue] is a big draw for people, now that they’ve done it up all nice. Georgia Avenue gets a lot of customers, because they’re on a busy street and people feel safe.”

**SB:** “But on Fenton, there’s a lot more vacant property and large empty parking lots.”

**MJ:** “If the lighting’s not good and the area’s not safe, all the benches in the world won’t help...”

**SB:** “.....The restoration of the Silver Theater was a huge step in bringing people back to the downtown, as well as a symbolic gesture that signifies Silver Spring as a community that truly values the arts. Fenton Street Village and South Silver Spring could very well become a hot arts district.”

**MJ:** (laughs) “I’m hopeful. We’re all hopeful. I’m tired of looking at Silver Spring as a faded Miss America.”

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